

PROCEEDINGS

13.

OF A

CONVENTION

OF

MEDICAL DELEGATES,

HELD AT NORTHAMPTON,

IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, ON THE 20TH DAY OF
JUNE, 1827.

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PROCEEDINGS OF A CONVENTION

Of Medical Delegates, held at Northampton, in the State of Massachusetts, on the twentieth day of June, 1827, and continued by adjournment on the following day, in compliance with an invitation from the Medical Society of Vermont, addressed to the Medical Societies and Institutions in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York.

THE meeting of the Delegates was held at the Court-house in Northampton, and was composed of the following gentlemen, viz :

ARIEL MANN, M.D. from the Medical Society of Maine.

JOHN D. WELLS, M.D. from the Medical Institution of Bowdoin College.

MATTHIAS SPALDING, M.D. from the Medical Society of New Hampshire.

REUBEN D. MUSSEY, M.D. from the Medical Institution of Dartmouth College.

JAMES P. CHAPLIN, M.D. from the Massachusetts Medical Society.

JAMES JACKSON, M.D. from the Medical Institution of Harvard University.

HENRY H. CHILDS, M.D. from the Berkshire Medical Institution.

STEPHEN W. WILLIAMS, M.D. from the Berkshire Medical Institution.

USHER PARSONS, M.D. from the Medical Institution of Brown College.

SAMUEL B. WOODWARD, M.D. from the Connecticut Medical Society.

GEORGE SUMNER, M.D. from the Connecticut Medical Society.

The Convention was organized by the choice of a President and Secretary. Dr. Jackson was elected President, and Dr. Mussey, Secretary.

A letter was received at the opening of the Convention from Joseph A. Gallup, M.D. President of the Vermont Medical Society, stating the reasons why a delegate had not been appointed by that Society,* expressing the strong interest which its members continue to take in the objects of the Convention, and containing important observations on the various subjects which had been suggested in the first instance by the Vermont Medical Society. It was ordered that this letter be laid on the table, and that it be referred to and its various observations considered, when the subjects to which they related should be brought under discussion.

After discussing the various subjects which had been suggested by the Vermont Medical Society, and such others as were proposed by the members of the Convention, the regulations which follow were adopted unanimously, and it was directed that they be communicated as the result of the proceedings of this Convention to the several Societies and Institutions in the States of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York; and that they be recommended to the same to be ratified by each of them respectively.

Before mentioning the regulations presented to the consideration of their constituents, the Convention deem it proper to state respectfully the general objects they have had in view, the methods by which it has appeared to them those objects might be best attained, and an explanation of the motives for some of the particular provisions contained in the said regulations.

Although there is reason rather for congratulation than reproach, or regret, in reviewing the progress of medical

* The State Societies of Vermont and Rhode Island were not represented, because meetings of those Societies did not take place till after the meeting of the Convention was decided on.

science and the improvements in medical education among us, yet from this very cause, we are enabled to estimate more highly the importance of promoting that progress and those improvements constantly and steadily. The state of society is such, that whatever profession is stationary must be relatively retrograde. This state of society may not justify us in demanding every thing which would be desirable in the education of young men destined for our profession, but it will fully justify constant efforts for advancing the qualifications to be required of candidates for that profession. It is in this way we are to discharge the great debt we owe to the community.

It is important in the first place that the preliminary education of medical pupils be more perfect than it has been in many instances. The advantages to such pupils of a proper literary education, and of an acquaintance with the elements of the physical sciences, are two-fold; first, the mind is disciplined, so that the study of medicine can be pursued with increased power and profit; and second, the significant terms of science and art, and the references to the principles of the physical sciences, constantly encountered in medical works, are the more readily apprehended.

In proportion as the preliminary education has been more perfect, less time will be required for the studies which are strictly professional. To adjust in an exact proportion, the time requisite for pupils of different literary attainments would not be possible. In general, it may be said, that it is to be wished that every medical student should have had the advantage of a College education; but, where these advantages have not been enjoyed, it would seem proper that some specific acquirements should be designated, as the least which will qualify a pupil for engaging in the study of medicine and surgery. For those who are qualified for this study by a College education, three years is the shortest period which can suffice for its pursuit, before assuming the duties of the profession; and one year more seems the smallest addition which ought to be made to the term of study of those who have not enjoyed the same advantage. In correspond-

ence with these views, the Convention have proposed some specific regulations.

It is believed that the regulations in respect to these objects may be carried into effect without difficulty, if the members of the various Societies and Institutions among us will firmly and constantly adhere to the principles and regulations which may be adopted, and if they will invariably withhold encouragement and support from those who may engage in the business of our profession without a compliance with the rules prescribed. It is in this way only that the members of the profession can designate to the public those young practitioners who are worthy of confidence; and the public will with certainty learn, in most instances, that their safety will be promoted by the encouragement of those only who are thus designated.

In fixing the periods at which the several regulations proposed shall go into operation, regard has been had to the following circumstances. The decision of the several Societies and Institutions to whom these proceedings will be communicated, cannot be known before many months have elapsed; and if that decision be favourable, so that these regulations shall be adopted, a sufficient period should be allowed for their publication, before they shall be made to operate on those who will be the subjects of them.

It would be very gratifying to the members of this Convention, to believe that the measures proposed by them will be satisfactory to the several Societies and Institutions to whom these measures will be submitted. But they ought to be aware that their best endeavours may not have sufficed to produce the best results; and that, especially in cases where questions of expediency arise, there must always be great room for an honest difference of opinion. It is proper, therefore, that they should provide the means for further attempts to pursue the important objects for which they were appointed, in case the regulations here proposed should not be ratified by the majority of the Medical Societies and Institutions in the States of New England and that of New York. For

this purpose, among others, they have constituted a Central Committee, of which the members are so located as that communications may be easily made to and from them; and they have given to this Committee the power to call a new Convention, similar to that now existing, if the same should be expedient.

It would also have been highly gratifying if this Convention could have been composed of delegates from all the States in the Union. But the blessings of our extended territory are not without inconveniences. It would seem nearly impossible that persons from such distances should be brought together with any convenience, and continue in session long enough to consider all the local customs and circumstances which ought to influence the regulations to be adopted in such a case; nor would it be easy in any way to reconcile all the different habits and practices of the people of such distant territories as those which are occupied by our nation. Meanwhile we doubt not that the zeal in the cause of medical education is as great in the other States of the Union, as in those which we represent. The Medical Institution of Charleston, S. C. has very honorably manifested their desire to elevate the profession in the only proper way, by making it more learned and more useful. Unquestionably the same spirit exists elsewhere. We have therefore directed our Central Committee to communicate the proceedings of this Convention to the Medical Societies and Institutions in all the States; and we entertain a hope, that by conventions in the different sections of the United States or otherwise, the other States may adopt measures the same as, or similar to, those here proposed.

In every case where another State does adopt such measures, it would seem proper that the same respect should be paid to the licences and diplomas from such a State, as are proposed in regard to those of this Association.

The following are the regulations proposed for the adoption of the several Medical Societies and Institutions in the States before mentioned.

I. Those Societies and Institutions which adopt the regulations here proposed, shall constitute and be denominated *an Association of Medical Societies and Institutions*; and every Institution or Society belonging to the Association, shall constitute a member of the same.

II. Every candidate for a licence to practice Medicine and Surgery, or for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, shall produce to the officers before whom he is to be examined, satisfactory evidence that he has received from some respectable College the degree of Bachelor of Arts; or, that previous to the commencement of his professional studies he had acquired a good English education, and such a knowledge of the Latin language, as to enable him to read with facility the *Æneid* of Virgil and the Select Orations of Cicero; and that he had also obtained a good acquaintance with the principles of Geometry and Natural Philosophy.

III. Every such candidate, if he has been graduated at some respectable College, shall have pursued the study of Medicine and Surgery three years after his graduation; and if he has not been thus graduated, he shall have pursued the said study four years, with some physician or physicians licenced to practice Physic and Surgery under the laws of the State in which the parties reside.

IV. No student shall be allowed to absent himself from his studies more than six weeks in any one year of his professional pupillage; nor shall any student be admitted to an examination before he has arrived at the age of twenty-one years.

V. Every candidate for a *licence* as above, shall have attended, during the period of his professional pupillage, one full course of Lectures at some incorporated Institution on each of the following subjects, viz.

Anatomy and Physiology,
Surgery,
Theory and Practice of Physic,
Materia Medica,
Chemistry, and
Midwifery.

He shall, upon examination, give satisfactory evidence of his attainments on each of the subjects above specified, before an authorized board of examiners, and shall before the same board, read and defend a dissertation on some medical subject.

VI. Every candidate for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, shall have attended, during the period of his medical pupilage, two full courses of Lectures on each of the subjects enumerated above, at some incorporated Institution. He shall sustain before an authorized tribunal, a satisfactory examination on the several subjects which have been specified in the fifth regulation, and also on Botany and Medical Jurisprudence. Before the same tribunal, he shall publicly read and defend a dissertation on some medical subject.

VII. Every student applying for examination, whether for a licence or a degree, shall present satisfactory evidence of his good moral character, and a certificate from his instructor or instructors, of his having pursued his medical studies the requisite period of time. He shall also present certificates of his having attended the requisite courses of Lectures, from the Professors delivering the same.

VIII. The regulation which relates to the preliminary qualifications of medical students, shall not be coercive upon such as *commence* their professional studies anterior to the 4th of July, 1829; and those which relate to Lectures and medical attainments, shall not be applicable to students applying for examination anterior to the same period.

IX. Every Society and Institution, which shall have adopted these regulations, shall appoint a tribunal or tribunals under the name of censors, or such other name as they may deem proper respectively.

X. When a Licentiate or Doctor of Medicine removes from one state belonging to this Association to another state also belonging to this Association, he shall be admitted to

all the privileges of a Licentiate or Doctor of Medicine as the case may be, in the state to which he removes, provided that he lays his credentials before the tribunal above described, and such tribunal shall thereupon certify that said credentials are satisfactory. Nor shall any fee be demanded by the tribunal to whose examination said credentials may be submitted.

XI. In case any Medical Society or Institution, not originally belonging to this Association, shall accede to its regulations, the same shall thereupon become a member of this Association.

XII. If any member of this Association shall think there is cause of complaint against any other member on account of neglect or nonconformity with any of the regulations mutually adopted, the following course shall be pursued :—

1. The plaintiff in such a case shall respectfully but distinctly state its complaint to the party, who may be the defendant in the case; and if satisfactory explanations are made the case will then terminate.

2. If satisfactory explanations be not made in the case, then the plaintiff shall make complaint to the other members of this Association, and shall point out the remedy or compensation demanded; transmitting a copy of the communication to the defendant; of which satisfactory evidence shall be furnished to the other members of the Association.

3. On the representation so made, and after giving due opportunity for a reply from the defendant, each member of this Association shall, as soon as may be, express a decided opinion on the case in controversy, and shall communicate the same to each of the parties.

4. As soon as the opinions of the major part of the members of this Association are declared in favour of either party in the controversy, the case shall be regarded as decided, and the parties shall conform to the same.

5. If either party neglect or refuse within a reasonable time to conform to the decision so made, said party shall be regarded as losing, and shall thereupon lose all its rights as a member of this Association.

Resolved, That this Convention will appoint a committee of three, to be called a Central Committee, whose duties and powers shall be as follows, viz. ;

1. They shall, as soon as may be, cause to be printed 5000 copies of the transactions of this Convention.

2. They shall send copies of the same to each of the State Medical Societies and Institutions in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.

3. They shall accompany the copies so sent by a request that the Society or Institution to whom the same is sent will, as soon as may be, decide on the question of ratifying the doings of and adopting the regulations proposed by this Convention, and make the decision known to the said Committee.

4. As soon as the decisions of the several Societies and Institutions are communicated to this Committee, or if they see proper, as soon as the decisions of the major part of the same are so communicated, the major part having decided either for or against the adoption of the regulations, the Central Committee shall make said decisions known to all the parties interested, and shall declare that the regulations shall forthwith be considered as established, in respect to the parties so consenting to the same.

5. The Central Committee shall also communicate the transactions of this Convention to the Medical Societies and Institutions of the other States of the Union, besides those above enumerated, so far as known to them ; and to any distinguished individuals of the medical profession in our

country, whom they may think likely to take an interest in the cause of medical education.

6. The expenses incurred by the Central Committee shall be defrayed by the Medical Societies and Institutions interested in this Convention.

The Convention then appointed the following persons on this Committee, viz. ;

JAMES JACKSON, of Boston ;
JAMES P. CHAPLIN, of Cambridge ; and
JOHN C. WARREN, of Boston.

Resolved, That these proceedings be signed by all the members of the Convention.

A. MANN,
JOHN D. WELLS,
MATTHIAS SPALDING,
R. D. MUSSEY,
JAMES P. CHAPLIN,
JAMES JACKSON,
H. H. CHILDS,
STEPHEN W. WILLIAMS,
USHER PARSONS,
SAMUEL B. WOODWARD.
GEORGE SUMNER.

NORTHAMPTON, Massachusetts,
June 21, 1827.

